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Metro Action Commission helps disabled woman keep electricity on

By JENNY UPCHURCH
Action Line

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PROBLEM: Michelle Davis contacted Action Line about a crisis: She was about to have her electricity shut off and she had been waiting for assistance for months from the Metro Action Commission. She is disabled with mental illness and cannot leave her home, she said.

ACTION: The Metro Action Commission quickly took up Davis' plight.

Although she said she had sent in three applications for federally funded payments for utility bills, the agency could not locate even one for Davis. Lisa Gallon, spokeswoman for MAC, called Davis and arranged for her to fax an application in to her, then walked it to the office for review.

Davis qualified for an urgent-needs fund supported by Nashville Electric Service. It is financed by NES customers who use the Watt Ads sent along with the electric bills.

NES also has Project Help, which is administered by Big Brothers of Nashville. Customers can add as little as \$1 to a bill payment; 100 percent goes to help people with their heating bills. More than \$160,000 has been given in the past year.

Metro Action had to negotiate with NES to keep Davis' power on because she had not fulfilled past payment plans, Gallon said. But with NES' agreement and the Watt Ads aid, Gallon said, Davis was able to keep her electrical service.

"It is always best for people to contact us prior to any difficulty" such as a cutoff notice, Gallon said. If someone has applied for energy assistance and has not received it within six weeks, he or she needs to contact Metro Action.

Also, Gallon said, it is crucial that customers given a payment plan make payments to an energy provider because past defaults make it much harder to make arrangements in a crisis.

If a customer is not going to be able to make a payment on time, it's important to notify the utility and Metro Action as soon as possible to get aid or a deferral, she said.

WHO'S WORKING ON IT: Metro Action Commission, 862-8860.

DAYS ON OUR LIST: 4

Dickson crossroads to get warning sign

Utility bill assistance

Here are some addresses and Web sites that can help with utility bills:

12/20/07
Nashville Electric Service
Main Office, 1214 Church
p.m., Monday-Friday
North Nashville Office
Monroe Street, 9 a.m.
Friday
www.nespower.com/
736-6900

- Metro Action Commission
1624 Fifth Ave. N.
www.nashville.gov/m
862-8860

- Middle Tennessee
"Project Help" program
different organization
Williamson and Cantrell
information, visit www
the "Community" link

UPDATE: Shirley Orgain contacted Action Line about an intersection near her Dickson County home, where U.S. 70 intersects with Rock Church Road.

It's on top of a hill, so drivers don't see other vehicles until right before the intersection.

"While I realize that the hill can't be taken away, it seems that there should be some sort of method for slowing down traffic as it approaches the intersection," she wrote.

ACTION: The Tennessee Department of Transportation determined that a warning sign is warranted. The "Hill Blocks View" sign was to be installed this week, according to B.J. Doughty, TDOT district spokeswoman.

WHO'S WORKING ON IT: To contact TDOT, call 1-877—762-7892 or e-mail TDOTComments@state.tn.us. TDOT promises to respond in three days.

DAYS ON OUR LIST: 25

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